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Chief, FBIS

5 November 1954

Chief, Okinawa Bureau

FBIS Okinawa Bureau Lands Interests

REF : Teletype Msgs WA 865 of 8 October 1954, CW 266 of 13 October 1954,
and WA 079 of 3 November 1954.

1. Attached hereto is copy of memorandum dated 26 October 1954 to Chief Okinawa Bureau from the Okinawa Engineer District, subject: (Fee Value of Operational Areas.) The OED advises that this memorandum is for FBIS information and guidance only. The OED does not to date have authority to acquire lands.

2. Enclosed herewith are the following maps of the areas indicated.

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3. In view of the difficulty of obtaining the information contained on these maps, plus the strong possibility that some of the information may be changed before any acquisition of land is actually effected, only one copy of each map has been sent to you. A second copy has been retained in the files of this bureau. Should you require additional copies they will be prepared and forwarded.

4. As you may deduce from this memorandum, and from other correspondence from this bureau on the subject of land acquisition, the entire matter is greatly confused. Listed below is a summation of the information on the subject that this bureau was able to glean during the past month:

a. The Commanding General, Ryukyus Command (Deputy Governor, Ryukyus Islands) desires that all units and agencies on Okinawa purchase in fee simple the land they now hold or expect to acquire.

b. Congress has been requested to authorize purchase of land and appropriate funds for land purchase by Rycom and by the Air Force. Although no money has yet been appropriated, for the Department of Defense holdings the CG, Rycom states that the Department of the Army has authorized him to purchase land for U. S. Government Agencies. However, the District Engineer had personally advised the Chief Okinawa Bureau that authority is not yet firm.

c. Congress will determine the price to be paid for land. It will probably be either the fair value at time of taking or the current fair value. (Note: Price of land has doubled in the past 3 years).

d. In addition to paying purchase price of land units may also be required to absorb resettlement costs (about \$150 per family) for each Indigenous family displaced.

e. USCAR, although under the command of the Deputy Governor (CG, Rycom), has frequently hampered and stalled attempts by various units and agencies to actually take steps to acquire land.

f. The District Engineer, OED (who is in support of Rycom, but under the command of AFPE, not the CG, Rycom) has been given the task of setting up the mechanics of land acquisition. This includes surveys, title searches, and payments. The OED has received little or no support from USCAR - the agency responsible for resettlement of indigenous residents and for coordination with the Government of the Ryukyus Islands.

g. It appears that agencies which acquire land will not get clear titles, although payment for fee simple acquisition is intended. Instead, the agency in question will acquire "Perpetual Service Rights", which gives the U. S. Government use of the land as long as desired, but which apparently will permit the land to revert to the owner gratis when

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the U. S. Government interest is terminated. [redacted] and other legal experts who have been consulted on this problem by this bureau state that they have never before heard of an arrangement such as described above.

h. It appears that, when authority for purchase has been established FBIS will conduct direct negotiations with OED for purchase of Bolo Point properties.

i. The Department of State will apparently acquire Kadena housing area properties for FBIS and IBS. The OED now has on hand from State Department funds to purchase all or part of lands held by IBS (and FBIS for its housing area). However, no acquisition has been effected. FBIS would of course be required to bear its share of costs. (Note: It has been unofficially reported to this bureau that previous State Department attempts to purchase Kadena, Onna, and Okuma properties were blocked by USCAR.)

j. Rycom G-4 will apparently acquire Sobe properties. G-4 would like for FBIS to pay part of costs. G-4 appears to be indefinite as to whether entire Sobe tract would be purchased, or part of it held under long-term lease.

5. On 20 October 1954, at the Commanding General's monthly meeting of Unit Chiefs, General Ogden stated that he had received authority from the Department of the Army to initiate steps for land acquisition, but that funds had not yet been appropriated by Congress. He requested that the District Engineer (Col. G. B. Sumner) set up acquisition procedures as soon as practicable. General Ogden then asked the Chief, Okinawa Bureau if FBIS had money for purchase of its holdings. The Bureau Chief replied that funds were available and could be obtained upon authority from FBIS Headquarters, Washington. General Ogden then advised Col. Sumner that OED should actually implement purchase and payment for land holdings of those agencies such as FBIS, IBS, and CSU which had or could obtain necessary funds.

6. On 5 November 1954 the undersigned called Mr. John Brick, Deputy Chief, Real Estate Division, OED and Col. Sumner, District Engineer, to determine what has been done to set up procedures for land purchase. Col. Sumner stated that no definite authority for acquisition of land has yet been received from the Department of Defense. The undersigned advised Col. Sumner that FBIS would be glad to effect the first land purchase, and thus set the precedent for acquisition procedures. Col. Sumner stated that he appreciated our offer, would discuss the matter further with the Commanding General, and would advise FBIS further when authority had been definitely established and procedures set up. Mr. Brick stated that it was hoped that Congress would take action in the Spring 1955 session to settle the question of Okinawa lands.

7. It is recommended that:

a. FBIS Headquarters explore the legal and fiscal aspects of land purchase with the Department of Defense and furnish this bureau any possible guidance.

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b. The Comptroller be advised of the possibility of expenditures of funds by FBIS for land purchase at an early date.

8. It is our opinion here that acquisition of land as soon as practicable would be of considerable benefit to the U. S. Government and would effect considerable saving over a period of several years. You will be advised further as this solution develops.

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Attachments:

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